Agenda

1. Methodology
2. What makes WCC CT unique
3. Cross-site findings: use of core elements
4. Site progress
5. Final thoughts
Methodology

Survey

Observation and facilitation

Document review

Stakeholder interviews
What makes WCC CT unique?
What made WCC CT unique?

**Accelerants**

▷ Common workforce development focus
▷ Common approach to career navigation
▷ Stronger focus on racial equity
▷ New forms to resident engagement and leadership

**Challenges**

▷ COVID-19
▷ Changes in leadership
What makes WCC CT unique? Common focus on workforce development

Common focus enabled specialized WCC support (Workforce Summit, peer groups and training for navigators) and created a platform suited for the CHEFA career navigation grant. However, sites varied in their approach:

**Training**
- Professional Skills Academy
- GED courses, OSHA certification, a licensed CNA program
- ESL as well as ESL with child care and ESL with soft skills
- Home day care training

**Coordination and connection**
- Education and Training Consortium brought together front line staff
- Asset map
- Manufacturing roundtable
- Career fair

**Awareness**
- Career weeks, field trips, coordination of summer youth employment program for students
- Manufacturing career outreach presentations

**Voice of lived experience**
- Young Legends
- WCC residents speaking at state summit
- WCC resident participation in CT 2Gen Advisory Board
Progress related to workforce development

**Programmatic progress**

- Training participants gained soft skills, basic education, work experience, or job training
  - 33 completed Professional Skills Academy, half gained employment
  - 114 completed training at RIBA Aspira (ESL, GED, job training)
  - 60 high school students participated in summer employment program
  - 110 participated in ESL that also offered childcare to 50 children or combined ESL with soft skills
  - 59 home childcare providers opened or became certified

**System progress**

- New and closer relationships among workforce development stakeholders
- New stakeholders engaging in workforce system
- Workforce development stakeholders have better understanding of assets and challenges of low-income job seekers
- Working cities more active in state policy discussions around workforce development
What makes WCC CT unique? Career navigation

- Over course of initiative sites utilized seven navigators

- CHEFA grant of $250,000 in 2020 enabled one site to hire first navigator and others to add to their existing capacity in some form

- Navigators were located in community based organizations, public schools, sector-specific economic/workforce development organizations, and anti-poverty agencies

Navigator role

Varied but could include:

- Case management
- Job matching
- Referrals
- Job search assistance
- Support for specific training programs (outreach, coaching, post-program support)
- Sector awareness
- College navigation
What makes WCC CT unique? Common approach through career navigation

Career navigator progress*

- 111 individuals completing training
- 161 jobseekers gaining employment
- 577 individuals connected to supplemental wraparound services and supports


“She helped open the door for me to get all these opportunities…”
-Navigator client
What makes WCC CT unique? Racial equity focus

- Discussions and convenings around racial equity
- Specialized technical assistance related to racial equity
- WCC support around racial equity was often utilized by individual organizations rather than WCC teams. For example:
  - Danbury Chamber of Commerce hosted racial equity training for members of Connecticut Young Professionals
  - DanburyWORKS team hosted training sessions for local nonprofits, including stakeholders in workforce development
  - Town of East Hartford worked with WCC consultant to offer racial equity trainings to all of the department heads
  - WCC’s consultant worked on racial equity assessments with three Hartford WCC stakeholder organizations

WCC approach

- Design phase learning communities and early discussions around racial equity
- Embedded racial equity in benchmarks for core elements
- A cross-site convening and training
- Racial and ethnic equity and inclusion (REEI) assessments
- Follow-up work with consultants
Progress on racial equity
Racial equity support was weighted toward the end of the initiative, but WCC appears to have catalyzed early shifts in select cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danbury</th>
<th>East Hartford</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chamber of Commerce</strong> is now a champion for racial equity:</td>
<td>• Resident leaders developed a list of Black-owned small businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reports <strong>changes in meeting agendas</strong> centering racial equity and increased diversity in Chamber leadership</td>
<td>• Economic development office, local and state organizations, with resident leaders, organized <strong>workshops for entrepreneurs of color</strong></td>
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<td>• Plans <strong>racial equity training for employers</strong> this fall</td>
<td>• Town departments starting to make changes to hiring and recruitment practices</td>
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<td><strong>Police department</strong> has been a leader in <strong>engaging in community conversations</strong> on racial equity</td>
<td>• Team partner influenced to bring racial equity training to front line staff</td>
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What makes WCC CT unique? New forms of resident engagement and leadership

- Community Cafes
- Community dinners
- Pop up street conversations
- Neighbor Nights
- Zumba classes
- Barbecues on the police station patio

- Young Legends
- Community consultants
- Block captains
- Resident as career navigator
- Resident as peer engagement specialist

- Most teams engaged residents as representatives on steering or executive committees

- Mini-grants to support resident ideas
- Resident campaign for new sidewalk improvement
- Resident campaign on behalf of minority businesses
- Representation on state’s 2Gen Advisory Board
Progress related to resident engagement and leadership

- WCC partner organizations have gained greater understanding of intended beneficiaries (e.g. single parents in Middletown, young adults in Hartford)
- WCC partner organizations and other system actors making practice changes prioritizing intended beneficiaries
- Residents assuming new leadership positions in community
- Two of the working cities appear to have catalyzed bodies of resident leaders that will be sustained beyond WCC
- Some teams faced challenges related to expanding/maintaining resident involvement as well as connecting engagement strategies to shared results
Cross-site findings: use of core elements
Use of core elements: collaborative leadership

- Teams **developed and strengthened relationships** among stakeholders with varying histories of collaboration.

- Most teams found it **difficult to distribute leadership** with many relying on initiative directors or backbone organizations.

- Three teams **struggled to fully engage private sector and workforce stakeholders** that may have contributed to greater progress toward shared results.

76% of survey respondents report they developed stronger collaboration.
Use of core elements: system change

▷ Most sites reported key system change outcomes including **stronger working relationships** as well as increased understanding of barriers intended beneficiaries face

▷ While sites intended to focus on systems, many lacked clear system change agendas with some challenges related to pursuing system strategies

▷ WCC sites identified key barriers to employment/training in workforce development system; however, more sites’ efforts to address the barriers were fairly program-oriented
Use of core elements: learning orientation

▷ Sites showed a **willingness to change approaches and strategies** based on learning and reflection

▷ Many teams used **data to track programmatic outputs/outcomes** with varying degrees of depth

▷ Almost all teams made **limited use of data to inform strategies and broader learning**

**Percentage of stakeholders who strongly agree data and other evidence were used to determine if strategies were effective**

- Danbury: 19%
- East Hartford: 36%
- Hartford: 33%
- Middletown: 10%
- Waterbury: 11%
Site progress
WCC stakeholders see strategies contributing to progress for low-income people

Percentage of stakeholders who see benefits for low-income residents
- The city's low-income residents, in particular, are better off today because of initiative
- Initiative made lasting changes that will benefit the low-income community in the city over the next 5-10 years

Percentage of stakeholders who agree strategies have generated progress toward the result
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Danbury: 56% (Somewhat agree), 31% (Strongly agree)
East Hartford: 87% (Somewhat agree), 79% (Strongly agree)
Hartford: 55% (Somewhat agree), 64% (Strongly agree)
Middletown: 40% (Somewhat agree), 60% (Strongly agree)
Waterbury: 63% (Somewhat agree), 60% (Strongly agree)

Danbury: 31% (Somewhat agree), 56% (Strongly agree)
East Hartford: 43% (Somewhat agree), 57% (Strongly agree)
Hartford: 17% (Somewhat agree), 58% (Strongly agree)
Middletown: 20% (Somewhat agree), 50% (Strongly agree)
Waterbury: 25% (Somewhat agree), 38% (Strongly agree)
### Site progress

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>System</th>
<th>Collaborative leadership</th>
<th>Community engagement</th>
<th>Systems change</th>
<th>Learning orientation</th>
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Final thoughts
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- Covid impacts are pervasive
- Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity
- Leadership is key
- When selecting cities, pre-existing city capacity may be less important than appetite for the work
- Balancing programmatic work with systems thinking can help focus and sustain work toward the long term goals
- Resident engagement is essential. Given the investment it requires, its role and purpose should be clarified.
- We need to revisit how teams apply the principles of learning and use of data
Discussion

▷ What stands out that we should elevate/celebrate?

▷ Going forward, what supports could make the initiative more sustainable?

▷ What do you want to better understand?
Appendix: strategies and outcomes by site
DanburyWORKS:

10-year vision:
To reduce the poverty rate of immigrants and people of color by 5%.

Strategies:
- Engage residents to build trust
- Increase access to English language learning
- Improve access to childcare
- Increase employment access

Programmatic progress towards shared goal

Facilitated new community conversations, placing value on resident voice

Set groundwork for sustaining strategies with partners continuing work

- 59 new home childcare providers; 150 new childcare slots
- 500 residents connected to wraparound services
- Continuing community conversations with police department
- Chamber of commerce continuing racial equity trainings/discussions
- Piloted World of Work training and ESL classes with childcare
- CAAWC creating career navigator position within agency
- Established strong relationship with chamber of commerce
Middletown WORKS:

10-year vision:
To increase prosperity and reduce poverty among single-parent ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) families

Strategies:
- Connect with low-income single parents
- Connect single-parent families to wraparound services, training and employment
- Employer outreach

- Begun to raise awareness of challenges single-parent families face and encourage partners to support single-parent families
- Several residents connected to board positions
- Career navigator connected residents to wraparound services and some training or employment opportunities
- HOPE Awards supported resident-driven projects
- Stakeholders more aware of unique challenges of low-income single-parent families
- New single-parent resident involvement on city’s Citizen Advisory Council and statewide 2Gen Advisory Board
- Referred 100+ people to wraparound services
- Limited number of individuals completing training or obtaining employment
- Middlesex Community College new career navigator
Waterbury WCC:

10-year vision:
To reduce the unemployment rate of the River Baldwin neighborhood from 23% to 12% by increasing number of residents earning a livable wage by 150.

Strategies:
- Offer local hub for workforce training/support
- Conduct community outreach/engagement
- Address childcare barriers

Created infrastructure to offer workforce training/support services locally

Connected a number of residents to jobs with some income gains

Contributed to growing momentum to make policy/program changes to address childcare

- Raised awareness of RIBA as a local resource/welcoming institution and drew in over 160 individuals
- NRWIB career navigator operated at RIBA Aspira 1 time per week
- 116 individuals earning more income than previously
- 64 individuals placed in jobs; 48 individuals retained employment
- Assisted 10 families get childcare
- Started training for 10 women intending to open childcare
- Successfully advocated for Waterbury’s inclusion in legislation allowing providers to operate outside of homes
Hartford Working Cities:

10-year vision:
To reduce unemployment for 16-29-year-olds from 23% to 10% in three neighborhoods.

Strategies:

- Support young adult leaders to inform/partner with workforce development system
- Strengthen career navigation
- Develop forum to foster alignment among workforce development stakeholders
- Greater representation of young adults in workforce development planning efforts
- Stakeholders strengthened workforce development focus and alignment toward young adults
- Begun to catalyze new learning and capacity around career navigation with stronger focus on young adults
- Young Legends in leadership positions in HWC and other efforts
- Capital Workforce Partners’ new leadership development program
- United Way more intentionally focusing on young adult workforce development
- Merger between Education and Training Consortium and HOYC Career Pathways Committee
- Capital Workforce Partners and Hartford Generation Work’s new web-based career navigation app
- CCAT sustaining career navigator position with new learning related to connecting young adults to manufacturing
East Hartford CONNects:

10-year vision:
To increase household wealth so that 10% of households currently below median income are accumulating wealth and making an income comparable to town-wide median.

Strategies:
- Create employer-informed approach to align jobs with residents’ workforce readiness
- Connect with/support resident leadership, especially BIPOC and low-wage earners
- Develop greater career awareness/exposure among students and families
- Increased workforce development focus at EHPS and EHPL
- Town allocated CDBG funds to sustain PSA and sought out racial equity training
- Successful Safe Sidewalks Campaign
- New resident involvement on town council, commissions and 2Gen Advisory Board
- Municipal gov’t focused on changing practices to diversify workforce and supporting Black-owned businesses
- 60 high school students earned $62K+ in wages and completed 5,000+ hrs. of training
- Referred 1,000+ residents to wraparound services

Organizational changes aligned with increasing employment and household wealth

New resident leadership capacity and tangible results for Silver Lane neighborhood through civic engagement

Deeper understanding of/commitment to racial equity among stakeholders who are taking early steps to improve outcomes for BIPOC

Residents connected to wraparound services and jobs/training